

OUTREACH

Protecting and preserving Washington's fish and wildlife is a big job – too big for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to do alone. Throughout the 1999-01 Biennium, WDFW worked with tribal co-managers, conservation groups, fishers, hunters, landowners, farmers, foresters and government agencies at every level to promote the protection – and enjoyment – of Washington's wildlife resources.

WDFW's public outreach efforts involve virtually every employee in the Department, from those who work at the customer service desk to biologists in the field. For example, in preparing for the 2001 North of Falcon meeting where the year's salmon seasons were set, WDFW added two all-day public workshops and created a new interactive website to increase citizen involvement in the process. When the Wildlife Program began work on a six-year wildlife-management plan in May 2001, staff asked for public comment on top wildlife priorities and received more than 2,000 responses by mail and Internet. Those comments will be a key consideration in the development of the plan.

As the biennium drew to a close, the Department was laying the groundwork for a series of Director's Roundtable meetings with the public conducted in seven locations throughout the state. Those meetings, held in October and November of 2001, were specifically designed to elicit ideas about how the Department can improve communications and services for the public. At the same time, the Department was preparing to launch a new "Go Play Outside" marketing campaign designed to promote outdoor recreation and encourage outdoor ethics. Sponsors of the campaign include the Washington Wildlife Federation, Trout Unlimited, Natural Resources Youth Camp, and the Washington Hunter Education Instructors Association.

To support these and other public outreach efforts, several programs worked throughout the biennium to promote awareness and involvement by the people of Washington in the issues facing the state's fish and wildlife resources. As discussed below, the



A WDFW employee talks to young people about fish and fishing at the Puyallup Fair.

services they provide fall into three basic categories: volunteer activities, educational services and public information.

Volunteer Programs

WDFW administers a number of volunteer programs that give citizens an opportunity to make a real contribution to the future of fish and wildlife in Washington state. In some cases, the Department helps organized groups compete for grants to support their work. In others, it simply ensures that the work done by individual volunteers is consistent with accepted environmental practices. In all cases, volunteers work without pay, providing thousands of hours of work for the satisfaction of knowing they have done their part to sustain Washington's fish and wildlife resources.

During calendar years 1999 and 2000, some 4,800 people provided 188,660 hours of volunteer effort. Some volunteers may have spent a few hours planting native shrubbery on a stream bank re-vegetation

project in their local community, while others have dedicated hundreds of hours over the years feeding elk at Oak Creek. Volunteer opportunities include such varied activities as serving as a hunter education instructor, assisting at a hatchery during the busy salmon spawning season, providing counts of various wildlife and gathering biological data at check stations. WDFW publishes a calendar of volunteer opportunities that mentions the Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups as a key contact for folks looking to help fish and wildlife.

Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (RFEG)

The Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups (RFEG) program was created by the Legislature in 1990 to tap citizen interest in participating in salmon enhancement efforts. Fourteen RFEGs were at work throughout the state during the 1999-01 Biennium, restoring streams, planting salmon eggs and improving habitat for future generations of salmon.

Each of the 14 RFEGs oversees specific local watersheds in the state, from the Pacific coast to eastern Washington. Within each assigned area, each non-profit organization develops and proposes projects designed to improve watershed habitat, boost salmon production, promote scientific research and educate local citizens about the resource.

During the 1999-01 Biennium, RFEGs worked on more than 300 projects around the state, many involving partnerships with tribes, sport fishing and commercial fishing groups, the private sector, and local, state and federal agencies. State funding for those efforts totaled over \$860,000, which was derived from recreational and commercial license revenues and the sale of surplus salmon eggs and carcasses returning from state hatcheries. In addition, the RFEGs leveraged more than \$7 million from other sources, including federal, state, and local grants, foundations, donated materials and volunteer labor.

In 1999, the RFEGs worked with hundreds of volunteers to improve 148 miles of stream habitat, deposit 27,000 salmon carcasses in streams to provide key nutrients, replace or repair 41 culverts and release three million salmon eggs and fry. A report on the RFEG's accomplishments in the 1999-01 Biennium will be available in the spring of 2002.

Volunteer Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Enhancement

Through the Volunteer Cooperative Program, citizens throughout the state can compete for funding that supports projects beneficial to fish and wildlife that rely on volunteer labor and expertise. WDFW received \$2 million from the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account to support the program during the 1999-01 Biennium, of which 20 percent was used to meet administrative costs. The remainder funded 102 projects in five major categories: education, fish culture, habitat, research, and facility development.

As usual, the ingenuity and industry of Washington volunteers concerned with better fishing, hunting, bird watching and wildlife habitat resulted in some memorable achievements. Grant awards ranged from \$500 given to the members of the Port Townsend Garden Club to install a butterfly garden in a city park to \$92,000 sought by KBH Archers to continue the Olympic Mountain Elk Study under the guidance of agency wildlife biologists.

In 2000, WDFW created a seven-member citizen review panel to evaluate and rate all applications for Cooperative Program grants. Additional steps were taken to publicize the program, which in turn produced more than 150 grant applications for the most recent funding cycle.

Fish Production

The Volunteer Cooperative Program also supports approximately 250 Volunteer Fish Production Projects. These projects produce salmon and trout as fry, smolts, and adults. One hundred projects produced more than 7 million unfed fry from remote site incubators (RSIs) and egg boxes; 67 projects produced nearly 6.5 million fed fry; and 86 projects produce over 4 million yearling salmon or "catchable" trout. The total production from Volunteer Fish Production is more than 17.5 million fish at various lifestages.

The sophistication of these projects range from simple backyard egg buckets to full-scale endangered species recovery projects. In Hood Canal, three volunteer groups spearhead Hood Canal summer chum recovery projects in seven streams. In addition, the Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group conducts projects on the Union River and Big Beef Creek, and works in conjunction with the non-profit group

“Long Live the Kings” on projects in Lilliwaup Creek and the Hamma Hamma River. In the Straits of Juan de Fuca, Wild Olympic Salmon, in cooperation with the North Olympic Salmon Coalition, conducts projects on Salmon Creek, Chimacum Creek, and Jimmycomelately Creek.

All of these projects involve capturing and spawning returning adult salmon, incubating the eggs to hatch, and feeding the fry for a short time before release. These delicate procedures are not always conducted in the relative comfort of a hatchery, but rather often occur in adverse conditions using temporary field facilities. But despite these hurdles, these projects have generated dramatic results. In the longest running of these projects, summer chum runs have increased ten-fold on Salmon Creek and dramatic improvements also being observed in the Chimacum, Lilliwaup, Hamma Hamma, and Big Beef systems.

Education Programs

Responsible stewardship of the state’s fish and wildlife resources begins with education. Many young people get their first hands-on experience in salmon biology through the Department’s Salmon in the Classroom program or catch their first fish through one of the angling-education events sponsored by the Department. People of all ages are required to take basic training classes before they can receive their first hunting permit and naturalists can – with a little training – contribute to statewide research on fish and wildlife. All of these educational programs sow the seeds for responsible resource stewardship in Washington state.

Salmon in the Classroom

The Salmon in the Classroom program was created in 1991 to give students a hands-on learning experience in biology by rearing salmon eggs to fry stage in school classrooms. Through the program, students study the salmon lifecycle, become aware of water quality and habitat issues and discover the interrelationships of species and conditions within a given watershed.

In the past ten years, more than 250,000 students have participated in the program and reared more than 15 million salmon fry. During the 1999-01 Biennium, the number of permitted projects grew to more than 700 per year, up by approximately 100

Salmon in the classroom gets boost from sponsors

Since 1991, the number of schools involved in WDFW’s Salmon in the Classroom program has grown year after year. To help meet the growing demand for this type of instruction, WDFW has enlisted an array of public/private sponsors to help provide training or defray costs. Sponsors during the 1999-01 Biennium included:

- Seattle Public Utilities
- Clark County Public Utilities
- Everett School District
- Renton School District
- Yakima School District
- Tulalip Tribe
- Yakama Nation
- Colville Tribe
- Asotin County Conservation District
- Benton County Conservation District
- Pomeroy County Conservation District
- Ivar’s Seafoods
- Microsoft
- Tacoma Nature Center
- Northwest Trek
- Tri-State Steelheaders
- Trout Unlimited

projects from the previous biennium. Each proposed project is reviewed by Department biologists to ensure the appropriate stock is used and the planned release site does not adversely impact wild salmonids. As a direct result of the program, many teachers and students have created local stream monitoring and habitat restoration projects.

Project WILD

Educators across the state have found that students respond well to core educational subjects when they are taught in the context of fish and wildlife science. Students who have never demonstrated a great deal of interest in science or math, for example, can suddenly find themselves absorbed in observing salmon returns and tabulating the results. The Project WILD Education Program trains educators to meet state standards in science, social science, math, reading and writing through outdoor learning.

During the 1999-01 Biennium, Project WILD staff provided 40 workshops for 870 teachers, who in turn provided instruction for an estimated 26,280 students. Many of these workshops were offered in conjunction with the Water Education for Teachers (WET) program sponsored by the Washington Department of Ecology and Project Learning Tree sponsored by the Washington Forest Protection Association.

WILD program staff provide educators with activity guides and posters to teach ecological concepts. Project partners distributed 30 "education trunks" through the public school system, containing instructional videos, catch and release tools, fishing tackle with tools to debarb hooks, plastic models illustrating how to distinguish between wild salmon (with adipose fin) and marked hatchery salmon (clipped adipose fin) and educational games. Ten new WILD Salmon trunks were created by outside groups with WDFW assistance in the past two years.

NatureMapping

The NatureMapping Program gives students and other members of the public an opportunity to contribute to the scientific understanding and management of the state's natural resources through the data they collect on the world around us. Administered jointly by Project WILD and the Gap Analysis Project at the University of Washington, the program provides training and written guidelines to those who want to share in a public data base that documents fish and wildlife resources and their habitat. That information is used by natural resource agencies, municipal governments, environmental organizations and schools to help answer fundamental research questions about those resources.

Since 1994, more than 200,000 wildlife reports have been submitted for entry into the data base and 150 groups have contributed water and stream data. During the 1999-01 Biennium, the program sponsored 30 workshops, providing training for 750 teachers and reaching an estimated 60,000 students. An on-line NatureMapping home page was established in December 2000, and program staff are currently exploring the use of NatureMapping to involve the public in helping to monitor salmon recovery efforts.

Marine Education/Diversity Outreach

Responding to public demand for increased opportunities to investigate the intertidal environment, the

Marine Education program provides hands-on instruction in the marine ecosystem and tidelands stewardship. Since 1979, the program has expanded from its initial focus on razor clams to include all kinds of coastal and Puget Sound shellfish and marine fin fish. The program's single staff member provides classroom instruction, presentations to civic groups, beach walks, razor clam workshops, training for national and state park rangers and cooperative instruction with the Seattle Aquarium in the Tidelands Stewardship Training program.

Building on efforts began in the previous biennium, the Marine Education program entered into a partnership with two Asian Pacific Islander groups – the Korean Women's Association of Pierce County and the Indochinese Cultural and Services Center – to reach people in these underserved communities. One result of those partnerships was the production of the educational video "Good Food From the Beach," which addresses such issues as shellfish species identification, health issues, legal harvesting, and conservation. Funded by a grant from the Puget Sound Action Team, the video was translated into five languages and has been widely distributed. In 2000, project partners were invited to conduct a workshop on their model for multi-cultural outreach at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's national conference.

During the biennium, the staff member for the Marine Education Program visited 94 classrooms reaching more than 2,300 students; conducted 22 field trips involving 1,330 students; and offered 25 diversity outreach workshops with 1,251 participants. He also spoke with 116 students at four



Volunteers from the Wenatchee Sportsman's Association construct a water tank in the Collin Springs area to benefit elk, deer, bighorn sheep and other wildlife.

high school career fairs, participated in 15 cross-Department programs and staffed booths at seven fairs involving thousands of public participants.

Angler Education

The Youth Fishing/Angler Education Program works with sportfishing groups to provide fishing opportunities to young people and adults, provides educational material about fish and fishing to the public and trains volunteers to teach others about fishing and the aquatic environment. It also provides rods, reels, and fishing tackle to beginning anglers, and distributes pamphlets and fact sheets on where and how to fish.

Approximately 13,000 students received angling instruction or participated in a fishing experience sponsored by the program in the 1999-01 Biennium. More than 97 percent of those participants were age 18 or younger and overall participation was up by approximately 10 percent from the previous biennium.

The main reason for this increase was the Department's "Youth Fishing Initiative," launched in the spring of 2001 to increase fishing opportunities and education for young people, many of whom had never been on a lake or a river before. Under that initiative, nine "Kids' Klassic" fishing events were held in 2001 from Vancouver to Spokane, drawing more than 6,000 young people – many of whom had never fished before.

Angler Education has also been actively involved in Washington Outdoor Women workshops specifically designed to help women become involved in outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing tradi-

tionally dominated by males. Twenty-one women enrolled in angling classes through Washington Outdoor Women in the 1999-01 Biennium, and approximately one-third (4,300) of all participants in the Department's fish programs were female.

More than 700 volunteer instructors have been recruited and trained by the Angler Education Program, about 100 of whom conducted fishing training during the 1999-01 Biennium. At least a quarter of the instructors have been active continuously since the program was founded in 1988, and 45 new instructors were added during the biennium.

Hunter Education

Hunter education training is required for all first-time hunting license purchasers in Washington. A total of 21,561 students enrolled in 894 courses during the 1999-01 Biennium. Volunteers certified by the Department of Fish and Wildlife teach almost all courses, and a total of 760 volunteer instructors were actively involved in hunter education during the two-year period.

The basic hunter education training program and student materials remained unchanged during the year biennium, maintaining a focus on safety instruction and training practice with firearms and archery equipment. Instruction is also provided in principles of wildlife management and responsible outdoor behavior. An additional 600 people during the biennium enrolled in advanced hunter education, a voluntary program built upon an independent study model where the individual works alone to complete course objectives. ■

This program receives Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It is the policy of the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) to adhere to the following: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The U.S. Department of the Interior and its bureaus prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability and sex (in educational programs). If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility, please contact the WDFW ADA Coordinator at 600 Capitol Way North, Olympia, Washington 98501-1091 or write to:

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